

and straightforward task. It gives the Navy the authority to transfer excess U.S. Naval vessels to India, Greece, Turkey, Pakistan and Egypt.

With these transfers our military will have greater interoperability with the armed forces of these nations, all of which are either key allies of the United States or are located in strategically important regions of the world.

It is my strong hope that these transfers will encourage these countries to expand their cooperation with the United States in our mutual struggle against terrorism in all its virulent and demented forms.

I would also note that our legislation has already been approved by the House as part of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act which has, unfortunately, languished in the other body.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 1886.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the Senate bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IMMUNITIES ACT AMENDMENT

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3269) to amend the International Organizations Immunities Act to provide for the applicability of that Act to the Bank for International Settlements.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3269

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. DESIGNATION OF THE BANK FOR INTERNATIONAL SETTLEMENTS UNDER THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IMMUNITIES ACT.

The International Organizations Immunities Act (22 U.S.C. 288 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“SEC. 17. The provisions of this title may be extended to the Bank for International Settlements in the same manner, to the same extent, and subject to the same conditions, as they may be extended to a public international organization in which the United States participates pursuant to any treaty or under the authority of any Act of Congress authorizing such participation or making an appropriation for such participation.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Iowa.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may

have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 3269.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Iowa?

There was no objection.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and rise in support of this bill which would designate the Bank For International Settlements, otherwise known as the BIS, as an international organization under the International Organizations Immunity Act, otherwise known as IOIA, thus allowing the President to extend appropriate immunities to the BIS.

I should note at the outset that this legislation was requested by the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and it is also strongly supported by the Department of State and the Department of the Treasury.

As Members may be aware, the BIS is an international organization that functions as a bank for central banks and is owned exclusively by central banks. Following consultation with the Executive Branch and Congressional leadership, the Federal Reserve formally joined the BIS Board of Directors in 1994.

□ 1530

The Federal Reserve currently holds two seats on the BIS board and participates actively in the important work of the BIS to promote international financial stability.

Because the BIS is indirectly owned by more than one foreign government, the immunities granted by the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act are not available to the BIS absent legislative action by the Congress under the framework provided by the IOIA for international organizations. I concur with the Federal Reserve as well as the Departments of State and Treasury in concluding that providing appropriate immunities to the BIS has significant merit at this time.

The BIS plays a critical role in financing large volumes of U.S. dollar transactions in the United States daily for its central bank customers. It has also been integral to international efforts to promote global financial stability in the face of emerging market financial crises, such as those that hallmarked much of the last decade. Without extending immunities to the BIS, these transactions could be disrupted by mischievous lawsuits. This may create disincentives to conduct international transactions in dollars.

Moreover, an extension of immunity to the BIS in accordance with the provisions of the IOIA would provide protection of its assets held in the United States equivalent to the protection currently enjoyed by the European Central Bank and other international financial institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Indeed, Congress addressed a parallel situation in 2002 when it passed legisla-

tion allowing for the President to extend immunities under the IOIA to the European Central Bank.

As I noted previously, the Federal Reserve and the Departments of State and Treasury strongly support this legislative initiative to designate the BIS as an international organization under the IOIA. I urge its adoption.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3269. At the outset, I want to congratulate my good friend from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) for introducing this thoughtful legislation.

The Bank of International Settlements is the world's oldest international financial institution and plays a little-known, but key, role as the central bank to central banks. It also provides technical assistance to central banks of developing countries.

Although the U.S. Federal Reserve has two members on the board, because of recent restructuring, the bank is now owned by those central banks that have deposits in it and therefore technically does not satisfy the requirements of the International Organizations Immunities Act, which extends immunity to organizations in which the United States is a member.

Our legislation applies these immunities to the bank, helping it to maintain its important role and providing an incentive to keep these reserves in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I thank the gentleman for his thoughtful comments, and I would only add that the BIS plays a critical role in attempting to combat money laundering and to block the transfer of terrorist financing. It is a critical institution, although little known to the public; but it clearly deserves the immunities that are established for other international organizations and other foreign governments.

I urge adoption of this piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3269.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

TORTURE VICTIMS RELIEF REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2005

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules

and pass the bill (H.R. 2017) to amend the Torture Victims Relief Act of 1998 to authorize appropriations to provide assistance for domestic and foreign programs and centers for the treatment of victims of torture, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2017

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Torture Victims Relief Reauthorization Act of 2005".

SEC. 2. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

It is the policy of the United States—

(1) to ensure that, in its support abroad for programs and centers for the treatment of victims of torture, particular incentives and support should be given to establishing and supporting such programs and centers in emerging democracies, in post-conflict environments, and, with a view to providing services to refugees and internally displaced persons, in areas as close to ongoing conflict as safely as possible; and

(2) to ensure that, in its support for domestic programs and centers for the treatment of victims of torture, particular attention should be given to regions with significant immigrant or refugee populations.

SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR DOMESTIC TREATMENT CENTERS FOR VICTIMS OF TORTURE.

Section 5(b)(1) of the Torture Victims Relief Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 2152 note) is amended to read as follows:

"(1) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Of the amounts authorized to be appropriated for the Department of Health and Human Services for fiscal years 2006 and 2007, there are authorized to be appropriated to carry out subsection (a) \$25,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2006 and 2007."

SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR FOREIGN TREATMENT CENTERS FOR VICTIMS OF TORTURE.

Section 4(b)(1) of the Torture Victims Relief Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 2152 note) is amended to read as follows:

"(1) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Of the amounts authorized to be appropriated for fiscal years 2006 and 2007 pursuant to chapter 1 of part I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, there are authorized to be appropriated to the President to carry out section 130 of such Act \$12,000,000 for fiscal year 2006 and \$13,000,000 for fiscal year 2007."

SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE UNITED STATES CONTRIBUTION TO THE UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTARY FUND FOR VICTIMS OF TORTURE.

Of the amounts authorized to be appropriated for fiscal years 2006 and 2007 pursuant to chapter 3 of part I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, there are authorized to be appropriated to the President for a voluntary contribution to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture \$7,000,000 for fiscal year 2006 and \$8,000,000 for fiscal year 2007.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, nationwide there are an estimated 400,000 torture survivors, most of whom came to the United States as refugees. Worldwide, it is impossible to count the numbers. As witnesses have repeatedly testified before our committee and before the Congress, the paralyzing scars from the physical and psychological wounds of torture can remain for years. Torture impacts not only the individual victim but their families and society as well.

Yesterday, the first witnesses testified in the trial of Saddam Hussein. Demonstrating heroic courage, they described torture on a scale that is almost beyond belief and which is simply too grisly to be repeated here. Although these events described happened many years ago, their testimony painfully illustrates the lasting impact torture has on those who survive it, their families and communities. There can be no doubt that Hussein's systematic torture was intended not only to punish specific victims but to coerce an entire population into silence and into subservience. As we try to bring democracy to Iraq and to other parts around the globe, we must try to heal the victims of torture that was used to prevent democracy from taking hold in the past.

In 1998, Mr. Speaker, Congress took a historic step towards repairing the broken lives of torture victims with the passage of the Torture Victims Relief Act of 1998. I sponsored that legislation, and I was joined by my good friend and colleague (Mr. LANTOS), who has also been a hero in this battle to help torture victims. We also sponsored the Torture Victims Relief Reauthorization Act of 1999 and the Torture Victims Relief Reauthorization Act of 2003. As important as these congressional measures have been, there continues to be an enormous need for us to reach out to the victims of torture who oftentimes have no other recourse for their suffering. Therefore, I strongly urge my colleagues to join us today in supporting H.R. 2017, the Torture Victims Relief Reauthorization Act of 2005.

The domestic aspect of this legislation, Mr. Speaker, is designed to ensure that particular attention is given to torture victims in regions with significant immigrant and refugee populations. The measure authorizes \$25 million for fiscal year 2006 and \$25 million for fiscal year 2007 to the Department of Health and Human Services to assist domestic treatment centers. This maintains the current \$25 million authorization funding level for fiscal year 2005 for such centers.

Currently, 27 programs in 16 States are assisted by the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement. In addition to direct assistance, many of these cen-

ters are also engaged in training mainstream organizations and personnel in the specialized treatment of torture victims.

The number of survivors seeking treatment at U.S. centers funded through the Torture Victims Relief and Reauthorization acts has steadily increased throughout the years. The client base at just 14 such centers increased from 935 in 1999 to 1,550 in 2000 to 2,579 in 2001. A subsequent survey showed that during 2002, 23 Torture Victim Relief Act-funded centers treated over 3,600 clients. With the additional funding, it is estimated the U.S. centers would have the capacity and the capability to serve an additional 2,800 survivors per year.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2017 also authorizes \$12 million in 2006 and \$13 million in 2007 for foreign treatment centers and programs administered through USAID's Victims of Torture fund. This authorization would maintain the current fiscal year 2005 authorization for 2006 and increase it by \$1 million for fiscal year 2007.

The bill gives particular emphasis to supporting centers and programs abroad in emerging democracies and postconflict environments. Nongovernmental organizations that receive this funding provide direct services to survivors, their families, and their communities. They also strengthen institutions on the ground and the indigenous capacity of these institutions to deliver services to survivors. In addition to providing treatment, many of these programs advocate for the elimination of torture itself in these countries.

Lastly, the measure maintains current authorization levels of \$7 million for fiscal year 2006 for the U.N. Voluntary Fund for the Victims of Torture. It would increase this funding to \$8 million in fiscal year 2007. In 2001, in just that one year alone, the U.N. fund assisted some 77,000 victims of torture. This type of humanitarian assistance provided by organizations which receive grants from the fund consists mainly of psychological, medical, social, legal, and economic assistance.

Again, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I attach for printing in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD an exchange of letters between Chairman HYDE and Chairman BARTON on the bill H.R. 2017 "The Torture Victims Relief Reauthorization Act of 2005."

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,

Washington, DC, November 29, 2005.

Hon. JOE BARTON,
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce,
Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: On June 30, 2005, the Committee on International Relations authorized me to seek consideration of H.R. 2017, the "Torture Victims Relief Reauthorization Act of 2005," under suspension of the

rules. As you are aware, H.R. 2017 was additionally referred to your Committee. The bill contains language which falls within the Rule X jurisdiction of your Committee. Your Committee's subject matter jurisdiction relates to the authorization for domestic treatment centers for victims of torture.

I write to ask that the Committee on Energy and Commerce waive its opportunity to mark up provisions referred to it. Timely action by the Energy and Commerce Committee would allow this Committee to proceed expeditiously to the House floor. By waiving the opportunity to mark up the bill, I understand that your Committee does not waive any future jurisdictional claim over this or similar measures. In addition, in the event of a conference with the Senate on this matter, I will recommend that your Committee have the right to seek the appointment of conferees.

A copy of this letter and your reply will be placed in the Congressional Record when the bill is considered on the floor.

Sincerely,

HENRY J. HYDE,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE,
Washington, DC, December 1, 2005.

Hon. HENRY J. HYDE,
Chairman, Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN HYDE: Thank you for your November 29, 2005 letter concerning H.R. 2017, the Torture Victims Relief Reauthorization Act of 2005. As you know, the Committee on Energy and Commerce was named as an additional Committee of jurisdiction upon the bill's introduction.

I recognize your desire to bring this legislation before the House in an expeditious manner. Accordingly, I will not exercise my Committee's right to a full referral on the bill. By agreeing to waive its consideration of the bill, however, the Committee on Energy and Commerce does not waive its jurisdiction over H.R. 2017. In addition, the Committee on Energy and Commerce reserves its right to seek conferees on any provisions of the bill that are within its jurisdiction during any House-Senate conference that may be convened on this legislation. I thank you for your commitment to support any request by the Committee on Energy and Commerce for conferees on H.R. 2017 or similar legislation.

Thank you for your attention to these matters, and I look forward to working with you as this legislation moves forward.

Sincerely,

JOE BARTON,
Chairman.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong and enthusiastic support for this legislation.

As the principal Democratic cosponsor of the Torture Victims Relief Reauthorization Act of 2005, I would like to thank my good friend and distinguished colleague from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) for his longstanding leadership on human rights in general and on issues relating to the despicable practice of torture in particular. No one, Mr. Speaker, in this body has done as much to fight for victims of torture as has my friend from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

The Torture Victims Relief Act is an important expression of our out-

standing commitment to combat the effects of the most despicable of all human rights violations, the increasing use of torture around the world.

Of course, exact figures are difficult to come by, but well over 100 countries worldwide still engage in torture as we meet here today. For that reason, Mr. Speaker, I strongly support the McCain amendment, which was overwhelmingly adopted by the other body. The McCain amendment prohibits any torture or any cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment by the United States of detainees wherever they are held; and its adoption into law will send a strong signal that the United States will not tolerate this despicable practice.

Mr. Speaker, over 400,000 survivors of overseas torture reside in the United States. Some 100 million may exist worldwide. More than 250 treatment centers operate globally with the sole purpose of providing crucial services to torture survivors.

In the United States, the Center for Victims of Torture in Minnesota was the first of its kind in our country and the third torture victims center in the world.

The ramifications of torture practices are beyond the realm of comprehension. Torture leaves no victim unscarred. It shapes the remainder of his life. While physical wounds may ultimately heal, torture survivors need ongoing psychosocial services and therapy to cope with the post-traumatic stress that afflicts them daily. Recovering from torture is a long-term process. It can take years before torture survivors can once again feel emotionally stable and comfortable in society.

Mr. Speaker, I am deeply troubled by the worsening financial situation facing many well-established centers in the United States. Many of these centers had just developed enough expertise and capacity to make a real impact in the treatment of survivors only to learn that their Federal funds were eliminated or reduced significantly.

□ 1545

In my own congressional district, the 12th District of California, Federal funds to several torture survivor centers were cut severely, despite the fact that they established themselves as outstanding institutions in the field.

This development happened despite the fact that the San Francisco area is one of the main ports of entry for survivors of torture, particularly from Asia.

I am therefore delighted that the findings section of the legislation before us makes it clear that particular attention must be given to regions such as Northern California with significant immigrant and refugee populations.

The legislation before the House will have a positive impact on the provision of assistance to the victims of torture. Mr. Speaker, I fully support this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA).

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), who has been like a consistent drum beat on these issues of humanity and preservation of life throughout this world. I want to again thank him for championing another cause that will help, unfortunately thousands, at least in this country, of individuals when we know that there are millions throughout the world. But at least here in this country, this act, if we are able to reauthorize it, will continue to help many people who are trying to get themselves back on their feet.

To the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), we want to say thank you for constantly being the light of the vigil and certainly the voices for many people who otherwise would not have that opportunity to have their life restored.

Mr. Speaker, we know that torture exists. We know that despicable acts continue throughout the world, and we know that there are people who actually survive some of the most heinous types of crimes that can be committed on any adults and children. And when that happens and some of those people are able to somehow make it to the land that we call the "land of the freedom," it is sometimes very difficult for us to find them if they do not speak out.

And many of those folks will not speak out because the last thing they want to do is let anyone know that they, in fact, were tortured, or let the people that tortured them know that they are still alive. But these folks deserve some assistance.

It is not only fitting that we try to reauthorize this act, which will provide some assistance to some of the centers here in the United States but also abroad that are providing some noble work to those who need it, but they are doing this in a way that coordinates services that otherwise would have to be used by some of these victims of torture who are here in this country.

As the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) said, there are some 400,000 people in this country today who are the victims and survivors of torture. In the county of Los Angeles alone, there are over 10,000 people that we can document that are the survivors of torture.

If it were not for the coordination that these treatment centers provide in terms of health care, psychological services and the like, many of these would continue on in a cycle that I unfortunately think would be a cycle of dead-end roads, where they would not know where to go, principally because many come from other parts of the world, and also because they would not know how to navigate throughout this country.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2017.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, we have no additional requests for time and yield back the balance of our time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 3 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my good friends and colleagues for their very kind remarks. This is bipartisan legislation. We worked very closely with the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) to come up with what I think is a bill that will make a significant difference to help those who have suffered the cruelty of despotic regimes all over the world.

I just returned from a trip to Vietnam. I was in Hanoi, Hue, and finished the trip in Ho Chi Minh City; and during the course of more than 24 comprehensive meetings with religious and political people, many of whom are under house arrest, or pagoda arrest, including that of Thich Quang Do, the venerable leader of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam, Father Li, Father Loy and many others, in each and every one of those circumstances, the more the conversation went on, the more you saw, while they suffered much in prison, especially for Father Li and others, they were subjected to torture and other inhumane treatment.

Their faith helps them get through it. But for most beyond a facade of coping, the mental pain is overwhelming. They and so many others like them all over the world need what this kind of legislation can provide in the foreign treatment centers as well as our domestic centers. We have learned much about post-traumatic stress disorder. We have learned much of it through our work in this country through the VA and the fine work that the psychologists have done and the psychiatrists in mitigating the pain of our GIs who served in Vietnam and in other conflicts.

But for other people who have suffered so cruelly, being put into coffin-like boxes for days and weeks on end, leaves scars. Father Calciu, I will never forget, a great leader in Romania who spent years in Communist prisons, used to be put in these small boxes where he would suffer beyond words. It was his faith that got him through it, but he carries those scars.

There are people like Armand Valadaries who wrote a book that should be read by everyone as a primer as to what the Castro regime does to its people, "Against All Hope." Valadaries talks about the torture that he and so many others in Cuba have suffered. And he is one of the brave ones who endured and overcame. But so many others retreat and slide into despair, clinical depression, and then sometimes even to suicide.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this. In like manner, I urge the appropriators to ensure that we meet the authorized levels. Torture victims are the walking wounded and they are on our streets. As both the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) and I said, 400,000 is the estimation of tor-

ture survivors living in the United States.

Many of them came here as asylum seekers. Thank God they got the asylum status. Many others survive throughout the world and need the kind of services this legislation can provide.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 1717, the Torture Victims Relief Reauthorization Act of 2005, to reauthorize and increase funding for the treatment of torture victims. As the ranking member of the Helsinki Commission I was pleased to be an original co-sponsor of this legislation, which was introduced by Chairman CHRIS SMITH.

The international community must aggressively address the issue of torture. The U.S. Government estimates that about 400,000 survivors of torture live in the United States, oftentimes after escaping persecution abroad for their political or religious beliefs.

This bill would help provide funding for 27 treatment centers in the United States and almost 200 treatment centers in other countries through the U.S. Agency for International Development, USAID. The bill authorizes \$90 million for fiscal years 2006 and 2007 for the Department of Health and Human Services, USAID, and the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture.

In my congressional district in Maryland, the Advocates for Survivors of Torture and Trauma, ASTT, organization is one of the 27 nationwide treatment centers that is supported by this legislation. The Baltimore-based group was formed in 1994, and consists of physicians, psychologists, social workers, and human rights advocates who assist in supporting the victims of torture from all over the world. The center treats patients from Maryland, Washington DC, Pennsylvania and Delaware. Over the past 5 years this group has seen its client base increase from 25 patients to 181 patients. The vast majority of their patients are from Africa, although they also serve clients from Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East. These individuals have been subjected to a horrifying range of physical and psychological torture. ASTT provides crucial psychological assessment and counseling to victims, works with other organizations to provide legal assistance to asylum seekers, and seeks to educate physicians and health care workers on how to identify and distinguish torture victims from other victims of violence. I congratulate and commend ASTT on their efforts.

Torture victims require specialized treatment and counseling, and therefore it is critical that today we reauthorize the Torture Victims Relief Act of 1998, TVRA, in order to meet the growing demand for treatment services provided by U.S. centers. U.S. centers have witnessed a significant increase in patients since the TVRA was enacted: from 935 in 1999 to 3,664 in 2002.

The reauthorization of this legislation would ensure that victims continue to receive the treatment that they so desperately need and that centers will be able to expand their existing programs to treat more survivors. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. SABO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the important work that is being done to aid victims of torture, and to reempha-

size my support for the reauthorization of the Torture Victims Relief Act, TVRA.

The enacted fiscal year 2006 Foreign Operations Appropriations Act provides \$6.583 million for the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture and fully funds foreign treatment centers through the United States Agency for International Development. Both the House and Senate versions of the Labor HHS Appropriations bill provide \$9.915 million for domestic torture treatment centers. We must continue to support a strong congressional commitment for programs under the Torture Victims Relief Act.

Minneapolis, MN is home to the United States first comprehensive torture treatment center, the Center for Victims of Torture, CVT. When CVT opened in 1985 they were the first center in the United States and only the third in the entire world.

Freedom from torture is a universal and fundamental human right. Yet torture continues to take place in more than 120 countries worldwide. It is estimated that one-third of the world's 12 million refugees are victims of torture. Politicians, journalists, teachers, students, religious leaders, trade union and human rights activists are all targets. The aim of torture is not to kill the victim, but to break down the victim's personality. Crippled, traumatized, and humiliated, the victims are returned to their communities as a warning to others.

There are more than 500,000 torture survivors in the United States alone—refugees and asylum seekers who have fled repressive regimes. In recent years, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of victims of torture seeking help at U.S. rehabilitation centers. In the U.S. there are 34 rehabilitation centers and programs joined together under the National Consortium of Torture Treatment Programs, which was started by the Center for Victims of Torture in Minnesota.

I have seen victims made whole after they received care at CVT. Restoring a torture survivor to full health has a lasting benefit for the entire community. Former clients of CVT are now public school teachers, small business owners, nurses, doctors and more. I commend CVT for their tireless work on behalf of torture victims in the U.S. and worldwide, and encourage my colleagues to support the reauthorization of the Torture Victims Relief Act.

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I applaud the passage of the Torture Victims Relief Reauthorization Act (H.R. 1717) and appreciate Representative SMITH's leadership on this important issue. This bill, if enacted into law and fully funded, will provide much needed assistance to victims of torture, both within the U.S. and internationally.

But I am deeply disheartened that the good intentions of H.R. 1717 will be undercut by the Administration's refusal to unequivocally reject the use of torture not only for the military but also for the intelligence community. I do not naively believe that al-Qaeda or other Foreign Terrorist Organizations have any respect for the U.N. Convention Against Torture. But, the United States immediately loses the moral battle against terrorists when U.S. policy makes acceptations for torture, and disregards due process and the rule of law. Most importantly, ambiguity about U.S. policy on torture puts into jeopardy the lives of captured U.S. citizens, both military and civilian.

It is time for the House of Representatives to embrace Senator MCCAIN's anti-torture language and move on.

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2017, "The Torture Victims Relief Reauthorization Act of 2005."

Torture can have devastating physical and psychological consequences for its victims. It is a worldwide health and human rights concern. The need for assistance for torture victims living in the United States is enormous. It is estimated that more than half a million survivors of torture, who fled persecution in their native countries, now live in the United States. Survivors of torture arriving in this country include students, academicians, religious leaders and political activists.

Programs funded through the Torture Victims Relief Act help torture victims heal and rebuild their lives. Because of this legislation, more than 30 organizations in more than 20 States are caring for refugees and asylum seekers who have been brutally tortured and traumatized in their countries of origin. Torture treatment programs funded by the Torture Victims Relief Act provide critical medical care, mental health care, and social services.

I am proud that one of the leading centers in the United States, the Bellevue/NYU Program for Survivors of Torture, is located in my district. This program is jointly sponsored by Bellevue Hospital, the nation's oldest public hospital, and New York University School of Medicine, a leader in medical education and research. Since the Bellevue/NYU Program for Survivors of Torture began in 1995, more than 1,800 men, women, and children (more than 600 in the last year alone) from more than 70 countries have received vital care. The Bellevue/NYU Program has established an international reputation for excellence in its clinical, educational and research activities.

One patient cared for through the Bellevue/NYU Program for Survivors of Torture is Samten. He is a gifted painter and was a leading artist in Tibet. After being arrested and imprisoned for writing poetry critical of the government, he was brutally beaten. During an interrogation session, he was told that he "was causing nothing but trouble with his hands" which were then forced into a coal oven. The severe burns caused significant scarring and disfigurement of his hands. He could barely hold a paintbrush and when he did, he had terrifying flashbacks of his abuse. Nightmares interrupted what little sleep he got.

At the time of referral to the Bellevue/NYU Program he did not have a regular place to stay. Through the Bellevue/NYU Program, he received primary medical care including pain management, treatment for exposure to tuberculosis as well as referral to hand specialists and subsequent hand surgery. Social service staff assisted him in finding housing and a pro bono attorney to represent him in his asylum case. He also attended a support group for Tibetan survivors which helped him to restore important social connections. Following surgery, he had marked improvement in the use of his hands. Recently, he was granted asylum, and he is again drawing and able to support himself.

The Bellevue/NYU Program and other treatment centers try to help torture survivors by restoring their dignity and their sense of trust. The centers also help them heal physically and psychologically, and assist them in getting on with their lives. Patients who have received

care from the Bellevue/NYU Program and other torture treatment centers are now working, going to school, and again leading productive lives.

It is urgent that we continue to support torture treatment centers, both domestically and internationally, through the Torture Victims Relief Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2017.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

URGING MEMBER STATES OF THE UNITED NATIONS TO STOP SUPPORTING RESOLUTIONS THAT UNFAIRLY CASTIGATE ISRAEL

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 438) urging member states of the United Nations to stop supporting resolutions that unfairly castigate Israel and to promote within the United Nations General Assembly more balanced and constructive approaches to resolving conflict in the Middle East, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 438

Whereas the 60th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations is currently underway in New York City;

Whereas the State of Israel is a critical strategic ally of the United States in the Middle East and the only true democracy in the region;

Whereas 60 years ago the United Nations was founded, in part, to prevent another Holocaust from ever happening again;

Whereas three years after its founding, the United Nations passed General Assembly Resolution 181, which provided for the partition of Mandatory Palestine and the establishment on its territory of an independent Jewish state, which became the State of Israel;

Whereas in recent years, the General Assembly of the United Nations has engaged in a pattern of approving resolutions that unfairly criticize and condemn Israel;

Whereas during the 59th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, the General Assembly adopted 21 resolutions criticizing Israel;

Whereas despite the myriad of challenges facing the world community, the General Assembly of the United Nations has devoted a vastly disproportionate amount of time and resources to castigating Israel;

Whereas for the past 30 years, the United Nations has funded three entities that support anti-Israel propaganda, including the Division for Palestinian Rights, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, and the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Human Rights Practices Affecting the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories;

Whereas the double standard against the State of Israel that is perpetrated at the United Nations is pervasive: of ten emergency special sessions called by the General

Assembly of the United Nations, six have been about Israel, and since 1997, at the annual meetings of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, only Israel has had its own agenda item (Item 8) dealing with its alleged human rights violations, whereas all other countries are dealt with in a separate agenda item (Item 9); and

Whereas as a founding member of the United Nations, the United States has a special responsibility to promote fair and equitable treatment of all member states of the United Nations: Now, therefore be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives urges member states of the United Nations to—

(1) stop supporting resolutions that unfairly castigate Israel; and

(2) promote within the United Nations system a more balanced and constructive approach to resolving conflict in the Middle East.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Resolution 438, which I am proud to cosponsor.

Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ROTHMAN) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) for their initiative in drafting this measure.

Let me also thank the chairman and the ranking member of the Committee on International Relations and the House leadership for moving this resolution to the floor so rapidly.

Mr. Speaker, as the current session of the General Assembly of the United Nations winds toward a close, there are still important decisions to be made. Will the United Nations reform itself along the lines suggested by the United States, indeed, by this House? Many of these reforms are supported widely among the member states of the U.N. and even in some parts of its bureaucracy. Or will it continue along its way, wasting money and political capital on what lawyers might call "larks and detours"?

Among the most wasteful of the activities of the U.N. is its incessant use of funds and time on Israel-bashing resolutions and institutions. While these were never good ideas, and have been opposed by all American administrations, any excuse for supporting them has simply disappeared with the changes in the situation on the ground in the Middle East.